

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 EB-11 COME-00 FEA-02 SCI-06

TRSE-00 INT-08 AID-20 AGR-20 DRC-01 /195 W

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R 060439Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5647

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 1786

BEIRUT PASS UNINT BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ, IR

SUBJECT: IRAQ-IRAN BORDER CLASH AND KURDISH PROBLEM

REF: BAGHDAD 98

SUMMARY: WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO INDICATE ANY IRANIAN DESIRE TO PREVENT RESOLUTION OF IRAQI KURDISH PROBLEM AS SUGGESTED PARAGRAPH THREE REFTEL. WHILE IT WOULD APPEAR LOGICAL THAT TEHRAN WOULD NOT FAVOR ESTABLISHMENT OF INDEPENDENT OR NEARLY INDEPENDENT ECONOMICALLY VIABLE KURDISTAN IN IRAQI TERRITORY, THIS DOES NOT SEEM TO BE THE SORT OF AUTONOMY THAT BAGHDAD IS OFFERING BARZANI'S KURDS. IN ANY CASE IRANIAN KURDS, DESPITE ETHNIC TIES TO BROTHER KURDS IN IRAQ, UNLIKELY TO BE ATTRACTED TO ANYTHING

LESS THAN INDEPENDENT KURDISTAN AS THEIR PRESENT ECONOMIC POSITION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS IN IRAN ARE FAR SUPERIOR TO ANYTHING THEY COULD EXPECT TO FIND IN IRAQI MOUNTAINS.

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END SUMMARY.

1. WE HAVE SEEN NOTHING WHICH WOULD SUGGEST IRANIAN INTENTION TO SANDBAG SCHEDULED MARCH 11 RESOLUTION OF IRAQI KURDISH PROBLEM. NO GOI OFFICIALS HAVE SO INDICATED BUT, SOLELY FROM LOGICAL POINT OF VIEW, IT WOULD APPEAR TO MAKE SENSE FOR TEHRAN TO OPPOSE ESTABLISHMENT OF INDEPENDENT OR SEMI-INDEPENDENT KURDISH STATE ON ITS WESTERN FLANK. HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO SURVIVE ECONOMICALLY SUCH A STATE WOULD NEED CONTROL OF A MAJOR ECONOMIC ASSET SUCH AS KIRKUK OIL FIELDS. TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE BAGHDAD IS NOT OFFERING A DEGREE OF POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE SUFFICIENT TO MAKE AUTONOMOUS KURDISTAN ATTRACTIVE TO IRANIAN KURDS, OR EVEN TO IRAQI KURDS.

2. IN CONTRAST TO THEIR IRAQI BRETHREN, IRANIAN KURDS HAVE LIVED AT PEACE WITH THEIR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FOR 25 YEARS. DURING THIS PERIOD AND ESPECIALLY IN LAST FIVE YEARS TEHRAN HAS MADE SERIOUS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SOCIO/ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF ITS KURDS WHILE PROVIDING LIMITED AND POLITICALLY MOTIVATED AID TO STRUGGLING KURDS ON IRAQI SIDE OF BORDER. KURDISH IRNANS NOW BENEFIT FROM MODERN ASPHALTED ROAD SYSTEM AND WELL MAINTAINED SECONDARY ROADS THROUGHOUT THEIR REGION AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IS SPENDING ENORMOUS SUMS ON DAM CONSTRUCTION AND AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS. CURRENT FIVE YEAR PLAN RATES KURDISH AREA SECOND ONLY TO COSTAL PROVINCE IN TERMS OF PROGRAMMED EXPENDITURES OF DEVELOPMENT FUNDS. PROGRAMS HAVE EVIDENTLY BORNE FRUIT AS PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS VISITED BY TABRIZ CONSULATE OFFICERS SEEMED COMPLETELY UNCONCERNED ABOUT KURDISH LOYALTIES. WHILE IRAN HAS BEEN EXTENDING ITSELF TO ASSURE THEREALITY OF ITS KURDS, RELATIONS BETWEEN BAGHDAD AND BARZANI'S KURDS HAVE BEEN SUCH THAT NIETHER IRANIAN KURDS NOR IRANIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS EXPECT THAT A PROJECTED MARCH 11 IRAQI-KURDISH AGREEMENT, WHATEVER FORM IT MIGHT TAKE, WOULD BE EITHER SINCERE OF LONGLASTING.

3. IN SHORT, WE DO NOT THINK GOVERNMENT OF IRAN IS SUFFICIENTLY WORRIED BY PROSPECT OF A MARCH 11 AGREEMENT TO TAKE THE KIND OF SPOILING ACTION SUGGESTED BY AMBASSADOR NAGGAR.

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